



NT263 'So the Word of God Grew Mightily': Gospel Expansion in Acts

Rev Dr Bruce Winter | 1.5CR

About the Course

Acts is Luke's second volume. It recounts the expansion of the gospel and finishes with Paul in Rome awaiting trial following his appeal as a Roman citizen to the emperor, Nero. Most Christians do not have a comprehensive understanding of Acts, which Luke himself divides into 5 sections. At the end of each section he pauses to recount how the Word of Lord is growing and is unstoppable.

This course aims to help students understand not only the Book of Acts in its 1st century setting, but also its overall message and relevance for contemporary discipleship in Singapore.

Credits

1.5CR

Fees*

S\$225 (Credit)

S\$120 (Audit)

Class Format

Online

* Alumni are entitled to 10% discount on audit course(s)

About the Lecturer

Rev Dr Bruce Winter holds a PhD in Ancient History, Macquarie University, Sydney and has a long standing interest in the intersection of the 1st century Graeco-Roman World and the New Testament. He has published four books on this important theme, including the influential study *After Paul left Corinth* (2001), and is also the Series editor and a contributor to the five volumes on *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting* (1993-96).



Rev Dr Winter has lectured at Moore Theological College, Beeson Divinity School, and the Queensland Theological College, where he was Principal until retirement at the end of 2011. For 19 years he was Warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, a member of the Divinity Faculty, Cambridge University, and a Fellow of St Edmund's College, Cambridge.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, it is hoped that the student will:

- Develop an overview of the Book of Acts, understanding its authorship, purpose, structure, themes and message.
- Gain rich insight into the historical background to the people, places, speeches and other references in Acts.
- Grow spiritually, through appreciating the unfolding of God’s sovereign plan for the gospel, as recounted in Acts.

Course Outline & Resources

VIDEO LECTURES & ACTIVITIES

For each topic, the relevant video lectures can be accessed through the video links provided on the course Moodle site. At the end of each set of video lectures, the lecture questions should be answered before proceeding to the next topic.

REQUIRED READING

All required readings are from The Acts of the Apostles and Peterson, D.G., “Introduction”, in *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1–52, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009 (available on Moodle). Please see the Course Bibliography below for more details.

S/N	Lecture Topic	Activities	Required Reading
1	Introduction: The Promise-Keeper Launches His Project	-	Peterson, D.G., “Introduction”, in <i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> , 1–52, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009
2	Concerning the Things Fulfilled in Our Midst	Lecture 2 Questions	
3	The Churches in Israel Built Up and Expanded	Lecture 3 Questions	Acts 1:1 - 5:42
4	The Churches in Israel Built Up (Part II): Stephen’s Speech and Death	Lecture 4 Questions	Acts 6:1 - 8:3
5	Peter’s Ministry, Paul’s Conversion and the Expansion of the Gospel	Lecture 5 Questions	Acts 8:4 - 12:24
6	Paul and Barnabas’ First Missionary Journey	Lecture 6 Questions	Acts 12:25 - 14:28
7	The Council of Jerusalem, Macedonia and Paul in Athens	Lecture 7 Questions	Acts 15:1 - 17:34

8	Paul in Corinth, Ephesus and Jerusalem	Lecture 8 Questions	Acts 18:1 - 23:10
9	Paul in Trial	Lecture 9 Questions	Acts 23:11 - 26:32
10	Journey to Rome	Lecture 10 Questions	Acts 27:1 - 28:30

Course Requirements

- Video lecture questions:** Complete all video lecture questions.
- Article review:** Select one of the following articles (all are available on Moodle) to write a 1000-word review (see the Course Bibliography for more details).

- Acts Against the Background of Classical Rhetoric* (P. Satterthwaite)
- Acts and Roman Religion* (D. Gill & B. Winter)
- Philippi* (B. Rapske)
- Chief Priests, Sadducees, Pharisees and Sanhedrin in Acts* (S. Mason)
- Diaspora Jews in the Book of Acts* (I. Levinskaya)
- Any other chapter from Winter, B.W., series ed., *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting, 5 Volumes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993–1996.

The review should:

- Identify and critically evaluate the author's central argument, purpose and approach to the subject, including areas of agreement or disagreement with the author
- Analyse the key features of the article, identifying the development of the author's argument
- Be well-organised and presented, with a discernible structure and the appropriate use of language

- Essay:** Write a 2000-word essay on one of the following topics.

- What can be learnt from Paul's gospel presentations that are relevant for today's society?
- Discuss the decision of the Jerusalem Council on the eating of food offered to idols and its possible implications for the contemporary church in Asia
- A topic of your choice, agreed to in discussion with your tutor

ASSIGNMENTS BREAKDOWN

S/N	Assignments	Grade Percentage
1	Video Lecture Questions	20%
2	Article Review	20%
3	Essay	60%
	Total	100%

GUIDELINES FOR ESSAY-WRITING

1. The paper must reflect graduate-level research skills. There must be a minimum of five sources in your bibliography (not including the Bible).
2. The paper must reflect academic integrity in that due credit must be given to every source quoted or used. Footnotes should be used to document the sources. Every source cited should also appear in the bibliography. Please abide by the Turabian or Chicago Style for all your footnoting and bibliography.
3. The paper must reflect a good command of English and organisation of thought. Writing must be concise and clear. Please proof-read your paper before submitting it.
4. The paper must reflect the customary hallmarks of academic writing: treat those who hold different opinions from you with respect, and avoid colloquialisms and slang.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

1. For **style and formatting** of assignments, please refer to the section on “General Formatting for all Assignments” available on the BGST Online Student Manual.
2. ALL assignments are to be submitted by uploading via Moodle. Alternatively, assignments can be sent via email to assignments@bgst.edu.sg without the need to cc. the lecturer (unless requested by the lecturer).
3. Students must submit all their assignments **6 months** after the course registration date

Students are advised that BGST **strongly discourages plagiarism**. For more information on this point (what plagiarism is, how BGST penalises it), please consult the BGST ‘Guidelines for Academic Papers’.

Course Bibliography

REQUIRED READINGS

Books / Articles available on Moodle are marked with #

Core Text

*#Peterson, D.G., “Introduction.” In *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1–52. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Winter, B.W., series ed., *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. 5 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993–1996.

- Winter, B.W., "Official Proceedings and Forensic Speeches in Acts 24–26." In *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Volume 1: Ancient Literary Setting*, eds. B.W. Winter & A.D. Clarke, 337–379. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Winter, B.W., "Introducing the Athenians to God: Paul's Failed Apologetic in Acts 17?" *Them.* 31, 1 (2005): 38–59.
- Peterson, D.G., *The Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- #Satterthwaite, P.E., "Acts Against the Background of Classical Rhetoric." In *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Volume 1: Ancient Literary Setting*, eds. B.W. Winter & A.D. Clarke, 337–379. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- #Gill, D.W.J., "Acts and Roman Religion." In *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Volume 2: Graeco-Roman Setting*, eds. D.W.J. Gill & C. Gempf, 79–103. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- #Rapske, B., "Philippi." In *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Volume 3: Paul in Roman Custody*, 115–134. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- #Mason, S., "Chief Priests, Sadducees, Pharisees and Sanhedrin in Acts." In *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Volume 4: Palestinian Setting*, ed. R. Bauckham, 115–177. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- #Levinskaya, I., "Diaspora Jews in the Book of Acts." In *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Volume 5: Diaspora Setting*, 1–17. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Bruce, F.F., *The Book of the Acts*, Revised Edn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Calvin, J., *The Acts of the Apostles 14–28*, Transl. J.W. Fraser. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Clark, A.C., *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001.
- Green, M., *30 Years That Changed the World: A Fresh Look at the Book of Acts*. Leicester: IVP, 2002.
- Marshall, I.H. & Peterson, D., eds., *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Mauck, J.W., *Paul on Trial: The Book of Acts as a Defense of Christianity*. Nashville: Nelson, 2001.
- Porter, S.E., *Paul in Acts*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999.
- Spencer, F.S., *Journeying Through Acts: A Literary-Cultural Reading*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004.
- Witherington, B. III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Wright, T. *Acts for Everyone*. 2 Vols. London: SPCK, 2008.